
MILTONIA ORCHIDS

Miltoniopsis orchids is a genus of orchids that houses approximately 12 epiphyte species and 8 natural hybrids that are mostly native to Columbia. The genus was established by John Lindley in 1837 with the description *Miltonia spectabilis*. These orchids have large, long lasting flowers that are often fragrant. They are commonly referred to as “pansy orchids.” Miltonia orchids grow in a sympodial fashion, meaning that their new growth does not appear from a single, vertical stem but rather from a stem that is horizontal. They grow new pseudobulbs from the base of previous growths. There are three species that are responsible for all present-day hybrids in this genus: *Miltoniopsis vexillaria*, *Miltoniopsis roezlii* and *Miltoniopsis phalaenopsis*. When in bloom, the plant sends up long, arching sprays of 10 or more flat, pansy-like flowers. These plants are capable of blooming multiple times in a year and are commonly sold as evergreen tropical houseplants.



Latin Name: Miltonia Orchid
Hardiness: Not frost hardy
Type: Evergreen tropical houseplant
Size: 24”
Exposure: Moderate, indirect light
Soil: 70% orchid bark & 30% sphagnum moss
Growth Rate: Moderate
Growth Habit: New growth appears from the base of old growth

Where should I plant my orchid?

Miltonia orchids are a great houseplant that can reliably flower if their cultural needs are met. While they are not frost hardy plants, they prefer moderate temperatures between 60-80 degrees. There are both cool growing and warm growing miltonia orchids available commercially today. Miltonia orchids appreciate a blend of orchid mix, fir bark, and sphagnum moss to retain moisture properly. They require excellent drainage and cannot sit in water for any length of time. They do however appreciate moderate humidity of 50-70%. This can be achieved by misting or placing the plant in a tray filled with pebbles and water. This creates a miniature greenhouse effect around the plant.

How much water will my orchid need?

These plants have heavier watering requirements than some other species such as phalaenopsis. Their watering requirements are similar to the thin leaf varieties of cymbidium orchids. They prefer to be moist at all times. Inadequate water will cause new growth to exhibit accordion-pleated style leaves. In the summer or during hot weather, these orchids may even require watering once daily. In moderate temperatures, watering every 5-7 days will usually suffice, however it is beneficial to check your plant mid-week.

When should I fertilize my orchid?

Pansy orchids are moderate feeders that appreciate a balanced water-soluble fertilizer at ½ teaspoon per gallon of water once per month. They are not deciduous and should be continually fed throughout the winter as well, but at ¼ strength of regular feedings.

Are there any pests or diseases I should be aware of?

Typically, these orchids are not visited by many pests, although bacteria may become an issue. They can however, become prone to thrips, and mites. The most common fungal infections for miltoniopsis are *rhizoctonia*, *botrytis*, or *anthracnose*. Many of these ailments can be cured with proper ventilation.